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THE RELATION OF RE-CREATIVE EXPERIENCE TO EGO STAGE DEVELOPMENT. PAPER PRESENTED AT THE NATIONAL SEMINAR ON ADULT EDUCATION RESEARCH (CHICAGO, FEBRUARY 11-13, 1968).

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THE RELATIONSHIP OF EGO-STAGE DEVELOPMENT (BASED UPON THE THEORIES OF ERIK ERICKSON) TO THE EXPERIENCES ADULTS IDENTIFIED AS LEADING TO RE-CREATION WAS EXPLORED, USING DATA OBTAINED FROM 73 WOMEN SELECTED AT RANDOM FOR A POPULATION OF 582 AMERICAN AND CANADIAN WOMEN GRADUATE STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN IN FALL, 1964. INFORMATION REGARDING RE-CREATIVE EXPERIENCES WAS OBTAINED FROM A SELF-REPORT DIARY SHEET WHICH REPRESENTED REFLECTION OF EGO STAGE CONCERNS--ENJOYMENT WITHIN THE EXPERIENCE AND INTENSITY OF RE-CREATION. PARTICIPANTS OBSERVED THEIR RE-CREATIVE BEHAVIOR ON TEN RANDOMLY SELECTED DAYS IN THE INTERVENING PERIOD. IT WAS FOUND THAT, FOR THE MOST PART, EGO STAGE DEVELOPMENT WAS NOT REFLECTED IN RE-CREATIVE EXPERIENCES. HOWEVER, A STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT ASSOCIATION BETWEEN EGO STAGE DEVELOPMENT AND RE-CREATIVE EXPERIENCE WAS FOUND AMONG PSYCHOLOGICALLY MATURE SUBJECTS WHEN THEY WERE IN A POSITIVE, ENTHUSIASTIC, CREATIVE MOOD BEFORE THE EXPERIENCE. UNDER THESE SAME CONDITIONS, INTENSITY OF RE-CREATION WAS MOST FREQUENTLY HIGH. IT WAS CONCLUDED THAT THE TENDENCY IS TO REGRESS TO A LOWER STAGE OF EGO DEVELOPMENT IN OBTAINING RE-CREATION. MATURITY AND POSITIVE DYNAMIC PRECONDITION ARE CONTRIBUTING FACTORS IN GAINING RE-CREATION IN EXPERIENCES OF PROGRESSIVE ADAPTATION. THIS PAPER WAS PRESENTED AT THE NATIONAL SEMINAR ON ADULT EDUCATION RESEARCH, CHICAGO, FEBRUARY 11-13, 1968. IT WILL BE PUBLISHED IN ADULT EDUCATION. (AJ)

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SUMMARY

THE RELATION OF RE-CREATIVE EXPERIENCE TO EGO STAGE DEVELOPMENT

The main purpose of this study was to explore the relationship of ego-stage development of adults to the experiences they identified as leading to re-creation for them. It was hypothesized (1) that ego-stage development (based upon the theories of Erik Erikson) would be reflected in experiences which lead to re-creation; (2) that the precondition of the individual would be a factor in determining whether an experience with a re-creative outcome would reflect ego-stage development; (3) that the intensity of the re-creative outcome of an experience is greater when ego-stage development is reflected in the experience than when it is not; (4) that the pleasantness or unpleasantness of the re-creative experience itself is related to whether the experience is congruent with ego-stage development.

The data were obtained from seventy-three women selected by random method from a population of 582 American and Canadian women between twenty-five and forty years of age, enrolled in graduate study at the University of Wisconsin in the fall of 1964. Information regarding re-creative experiences was obtained from a self-report diary sheet. This yielded measures of re-creative experience representing reflection of ego-stage concerns; enjoyment within the experience, and intensity of re-creation respectively. Indices of ego-stage development were obtained by means of a structured Q-sort based upon Erikson's theory. Split-halves of the Q-sort were administered four weeks apart. Participants observed their re-creative behavior on ten randomly selected days in the intervening period.

The Spearman method of rank order correlation was used to test the extent of association between over-all ego-stage development and re-creative experience. In dealing with the other hypotheses scores were grouped and frequencies were counted. Chi square was used to test for significant differences between observed frequencies and expected frequencies. Test of a hypothesis about a proportion was also used where applicable.

Findings showed:

(1) No association between ego-stage development and re-creative experiences within the sample as a whole.

(2) A statistically significant association between ego-stage development and re-creative experiences among psychologically mature subjects when they were in a positive dynamic mood.

(3) A statistically significant association between high intensity of re-creation when re-creative experience reflects ego-stage development of psychologically mature individuals.

(4) In most cases the re-creative experience is pleasant in itself. The existence of a meaningful relationship between the extent of pleasantness in experiences and their congruence with ego-stage development was not established.

Conclusions from both the quantified and non-quantified data provide some leads for the development of a theory of re-creation.

(1) Regression, regressive adaptation and progressive adaptation can each lead to a re-creative outcome. The two last named can have a positive impact upon healthy personality growth.

(2) Different types of precondition are important in determing what kinds of experiences will have a re-creative outcome. It appears that deficiencies due to both over and under stimulation need to be made up before a person can gain re-creation from progressive adaptation.

(3) In terms of the homeostatic principle, an experience leading to re-creation appears to bring about equilibrium at an optimum level of stimulation either by overcoming disturbances or making up deficiencies.

(4) Regardless of its form a re-creative experience appeared to be essentially a synthesizing and unifying one.

Implications for further research:

(1) A follow-up in each of the above areas so that an effective theory of re-creation can be developed.

(2) Investigation into the difference in the yield of enjoyment in the re-creative outcome when an experience takes place within social and economic reality and when it takes place aside from such reality.

(3) Further testing of Erikson's theory of ego-stage development to determine its relevance to adulthood.

(4) Exploration into the relationship of quiescent and dynamic experiences to personality development and cultural background.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship of ego stage development of adults to experiences identified as re-creative for them. Data were obtained from seventy-three women selected from a population of graduate students. It was found that, for the most part, ego stage development was not reflected in re-creative experiences. However, a statistically signigicant association between ego stage development and re-creative experiences was found among psychologically mature subjects when they were in a positive, enthusiastic, creative mood before the experience. Under these same conditions, intensity of re-creation was most frequently high. It was concluded that the tendency is to regress to a lower stage of ego development in obtaining re-creation. Maturity and positive dynamic precondition are contributing factors in gaining re-creation in experiences of progressive adaptation.

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